

Jesuit Relations, 1650 — “The Man of Peace from the East”

Source: Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Hurons, année 1650

Author: Paul Ragueneau, S.J.

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Translation: Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Vol. 36 (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., 1899)

Among the ancient stories of the Hurons there is one that our interpreters have repeated to me many times. They say that before the great pestilence, their fathers spoke of a man clothed in the light of the morning who would one day come from the rising of the Sun. He would walk upon the earth, heal the wounded, make peace among enemies, and teach the people to forgive.

They call him Oki lesousa, “the powerful one who brings peace.” When I told them that such a man had truly come into the world and was named Jesus, the Son of the Maker of Heaven, they marveled and said that the words of their ancestors had been fulfilled.

They added that when this man departed, he promised to return from the same quarter whence he had come, and that before his return there would be great thunder and the shaking of the earth. Some among them have said that in their dreams they have seen him standing above the eastern waters, his hands shining like the sun.

Whether these things be fables or the faint echo of an ancient truth, God alone knows; yet it seems that even here, at the ends of the earth, the memory of the Redeemer has never been wholly lost.

(End of excerpt, Relation of 1650, Paul Ragueneau, S.J.)

Archival Reference:

Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Vol. 36, “Relation of 1650,” pp. 74–76. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1899.

Summary:

In 1650 Father Ragueneau recorded an old Huron tradition foretelling a radiant “man of peace from the East” who would heal and reconcile the people—an image the Jesuits identified with Christ.

The account implies that echoes of the Gospel had already touched Indigenous memory long before the missionaries' arrival.

Subject Tags:

- Jesuit Missions — New France — 17th Century
- Indigenous Prophecy — Pre-Christian Messianic Traditions
- Catholic Church — Recognition of Divine Foreshadowing
- Huron Nation — Spiritual Beliefs and Prophecies